



## NEWS RELEASE

NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NEMA) – 1300 MILITARY ROAD – LINCOLN, NE 68508-1090

Joint Information Center (JIC)

June 2, 2011, 3:30 p.m. CDT

**CONTACT:**

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### Nebraska JIC Daily Update

*\*All times are CDT, unless otherwise noted\**

**(Lincoln, Neb.)** – State officials are monitoring rivers on a daily basis and asking residents in flooding and flood prone areas to assess their vulnerability and to prepare for flooding. Monitor media and official sources for information recommendations affecting their safety.

“We don’t know what Mother Nature is going to do,” said Brian Dunnigan, Director of the Department of Natural Resources. “We don’t know when she will release all that snow pack or if there will be additional rain. We are monitoring the situation and we are working to provide citizens with information that will be helpful to them as soon as we get it.”

Al Berndt, assistant director of Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, stresses the importance of taking steps now to assure your safety later.

“Be aware of what you’re hearing on the news and prepare you home for the possibility of being flooded,” Berndt said. “Local emergency managers along the Missouri and Platte Rivers are assessing the situation regularly and working to keep their citizens safe. We are making every effort to protect people and property in Nebraska.”

*\* New Items are in Red\**

A collection of flood-related resources and links to information can be found on the NEMA web site at [www.nema.nebraska.gov](http://www.nema.nebraska.gov)

#### **State Response**

Nebraska Emergency Management is working with its State partners within the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Nebraska and Iowa are working hand in hand with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure a safe response to the continual flooding threat. The EOC is monitoring both the Platte and Missouri rivers and encourages residents to remain vigilant, stay tuned to local news and follow directions from local and state officials if asked to evacuate the area.

Survey Crews are currently assessing the affected areas along the Platte River to determine what effects the water may have on homes, businesses, roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure.

In conjunction with the state emergency, several counties have declared disasters; Knox, Dakota, Washington, Cass and Lincoln Counties.

Nebraska and Iowa have both asked the Coast Guard to shut down the Missouri River.

### **Flood Hotline**

A Nebraska Emergency Management Agency public information phone line, (855) 211-2453 or (855) 211-2454, will be staffed from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, including weekends, until further notice. **The hotline has been busy, please use patience when calling.**

### **Weather**

For updated weather information weather: [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov) and [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

### **Road Information**

#### **Roads Department to Build Up Niobrara Highways**

Due to flooding on the Missouri River and potential flooding from the Niobrara River, the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) is preparing to raise the intersection of Highways 12 and 14 at the west end of Niobrara.

In order to ensure continuous access to the town of Niobrara, the NDOR will temporarily raise approximately 1000 feet of Highway 12 east of the intersection and raise approximately 600 feet of Highway 14 south of the intersection. Without knowing the exact water elevation or when the maximum elevation may occur, the NDOR is planning to raise the road 5 feet above the existing low point to maintain access to the community of Niobrara.

#### **North Platte Hwy. 30 Dike to Get Help from State Roads Department**

The North Platte flood stage is rising fast. NDOR is placing riprap at the abutments of Highway 83, Highway 39 and I-80 North Platte bridges, to protect them and the roadways.

The North Platte River has breached the dam north of Highway 30, east of North Platte. Heavier than normal flows moving east on White Horse Creek closed the county system and is at the top of three mainline Union Pacific Railroad tracks. This is a location where the water overtops Highway 30 at Mile Marker 183.5.

The NDOR is planning on refurbishing the berm at the bank that has been breached. A contractor will begin the process and landowners are being contacted. This berm would contain the Platte River in its existing channel.

Current road closure includes Highway 30 east of North Platte. Current road restrictions include Highway 12 in Madison County. Never drive through flood waters.

For the most current road information visit the Nebraska Department of Roads website at [www.511nebraska.gov](http://www.511nebraska.gov). Citizens are encouraged to find alternate routes and not attempt to drive over any road that is covered with flood waters. Do not remove road closure barricades. Barricades are in place for your safety.

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### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Joint Information Center – (402) 996-3877 [www.nwo.usace.army.mil](http://www.nwo.usace.army.mil)

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency**

If you are not sure if you are in flood prone area, check out the FEMA map service center <http://msc.fema.gov>

### **Animal Health**

Flood waters displace wild animals as well as humans. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) warns people to be watchful for wild animals. The wildlife may be acting abnormally due to the stress of displacement. As animals interact and compete for the same resources, diseases such as rabies have an increased chance of transmission. DHHS always recommends avoiding direct contact with wild animals; however, under these circumstances they may be in unexpected places and act more aggressively.

Flood waters may also displace reptiles such as snakes and turtles. Information on reptiles indigenous to Nebraska can be found at <http://snr.unl.edu/herpneb/>

### **Shelters – Red Cross**

The Red Cross has opened a shelter at the Ft. Calhoun High School, 1506 Lincoln St., Fort Calhoun. It will be open today at noon and will remain open until further notice. For the most current information check [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or call 1-800-RedCross to find the chapter serving your area.

Or call 211 (human services helpline) to find out what resources are available; or visit the United Way of Midlands 211 website at <http://www.ne211.org> an additional number is (402) 444-6666.

### **Water Testing**

Residents outside the Lincoln area can contact the Central District Health Department in Grand Island to test well water for Coliform bacteria in the majority of public and private wells statewide. Call (308) 385-5175 ext 160 for more information.

Homeowners can also order kits from the Nebraska Public Health Environmental Laboratory by calling (402) 471-3935 and request a Colilert test kit (\$10) which can test for Coliform and E.coli. Homeowners need to collect the sample and return it to the lab within 30 hours of sample collection. Remember, if your drinking water looks, tastes, or smells odd...test it. Even if water has tested okay, it should be retested later to insure bacteria hasn't permeated the well.

### **Flood Clean-Up Scams**

Homeowners and businesses that have experienced flooding are asked to remain vigilant when it comes to hiring services or purchasing goods. For tips on avoiding home repair scams, please visit the Nebraska Better

Business Bureau's website at [www.nebraska.bbb.org](http://www.nebraska.bbb.org) or the Attorney General's website at [www.ago.ne.gov](http://www.ago.ne.gov). If you feel you have been a victim of a clean-up or home improvement scam, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at (800) 727-6432.

### **Insurance**

The Nebraska Department of Insurance has flood insurance claim guides available on its website at [www.doi.ne.gov](http://www.doi.ne.gov). Insurance-related questions can be directed to the Department's Consumer Affairs Division Monday-through-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., by calling (877) 564-7323.

### **Fire Safety**

The State Fire Marshal reminds citizens that if your power is out, and you need to use a generator to make sure your generator has been tested /approved and is in proper working order. Try not to overload circuits, and continue to be cautious when there's a threat of lightning.

### **Additional Resources**

#### **Phone Numbers**

Nebraska Flooding Hotline (855) 211-2453 or (855) 211-2452

Nebraska Department of Insurance (877) 564-7323

Iowa Flooding Response (515) 725-3231

South Dakota (605) 773-3132 or toll free at (877) 579-0015

US Army Corps of Engineers – Information Center (402) 996-3877

#### **Web Sites**

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency website [www.nema.nebraska.gov](http://www.nema.nebraska.gov)

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' website has a comprehensive listing of flood resources at: <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/SevereStorms/>

Weather: [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov) and [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

River Levels: <http://water.weather.gov/ahps/>

NEMA on Face book: <http://www.facebook.com/nema.page>

Nebraska Department of Roads [www.511nebraska.gov](http://www.511nebraska.gov).

### **County Updates:**

#### **Cass County Emergency Management Agency**

Voluntary evacuations are taking place at Lake WaConDa. A public meeting of WaConDa residents is scheduled for Sunday morning. Two pumps are being brought in today. 10,000 sandbags have been requested for emergency levee repair. Engineers are being consulted to determine feasibility of raising the height of the levee.

Plattsmouth is sandbagging the water treatment plant and sewer plant at this time.

Arrangements have been made to open a shelter at Conestoga Public School if it becomes necessary.

Roger Behrns, Cass Co. EMA PIO [Cassemapi@hotmail.com](mailto:Cassemapi@hotmail.com)

#### **Morrill and Garden Counties Emergency Management Agency**

Morrill and Garden County officials met to discuss current flooding and the potential for possible evacuations as flooding worsens on the North Platte River. Emergency Manager Jim Collins said he is hopeful he will be able to give citizens 48 to 72 hours notice if evacuations are necessary.

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